

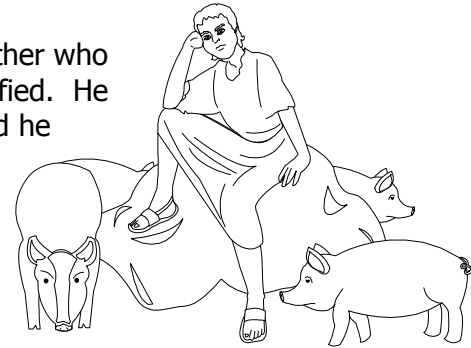
CONFESSION AND CLEANSING

Study this lesson carefully before answering the questions.

In another lesson we learned that a saved person has good desires and bad desires. God does not want us to give in to our old desires. Whenever we do we sin. In this lesson we will learn what to do if we sin. God has made a way to cleanse us from our sins. The Bible tells us all about it.

A. THE BOY WHO RAN AWAY

Once there was a boy who lived in a lovely home. He had a very kind father who loved him dearly and cared for him in every way. However, he was not satisfied. He wanted to go off into the world to have **his own way**. He made up his mind he was going no matter what anyone said, and off he went. (Read this story in Luke 15:11-32.) The father in the story was sad when he learned that his son, who was far from home, was living in sin and wasting all his money. When his money was all gone, the boy took a job feeding pigs. His clothes were ragged and dirty. Think of him feeding pigs and being hungry when he could have been at home enjoying all the good things that were in his father's house.



At last he could stand it no longer. Very much ashamed of himself, he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven (God), and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son'." He made up his mind to go home just as he had made up his mind to leave home. He was still a long way from the house when his father saw him. He had been watching for him, hoping he would return. The father **ran** to meet his son, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. He loved his son even though he was ragged and dirty. We feel sure that both the father and the son shed tears. The father's tears showed how happy he was that his son was home. The son's tears showed how sorry he was he had left home and how glad he was to be back close to his father. Did the father forgive him? He certainly did! His father was so glad to have him home that he put the very best clothes on him. He also called in his friends so that they, too, could celebrate the return of his son. Oh, how thankful the son was that he had been forgiven. Because he had been forgiven he could again live in close fellowship with God and with his father.



B. DO WE SOMETIMES RUN AWAY FROM OUR HEAVENLY FATHER?

Did you ever do or say something to hurt your parents and then not say you were sorry? Right then something happened in your home. It did not seem like the same place. Perhaps you even dreaded to go home after school. When you finally decided to go home, somehow or other you could not talk about the things that happened during the day. You could not ask for any favors. If you had cut your finger or received a poor grade on a lesson you did not feel that you could go to your mother and tell her all about it. You did not feel as close to her as before. Finally, you realized how wrong you had been. You ran to your mother, saying, "I'm so sorry! Forgive me, Mother!" That moment she forgave you. You were back in fellowship with your mother. Afterward, you felt free to tell your mother anything.

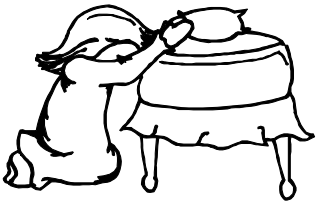


When we obey our old desires and get into sin, we are out of fellowship with our Heavenly Father. We are like the boy who ran away from his father's home. We cannot be friends with God nor can we have fellowship with Him when there is unconfessed sin in our lives. We cannot enjoy all the things that belong to us as God's children. We are still His children, but out of fellowship with Him. This is like being out of fellowship with our parents when we do something wrong. Sin hurts our Heavenly

Father. Like the father in the Bible story, God longs for us to return to Him and tell Him we are sorry. He would also like us to tell Him that we never want to do these bad things again. The very moment we tell God about our sins, He forgives us and cleanses us from our sins.

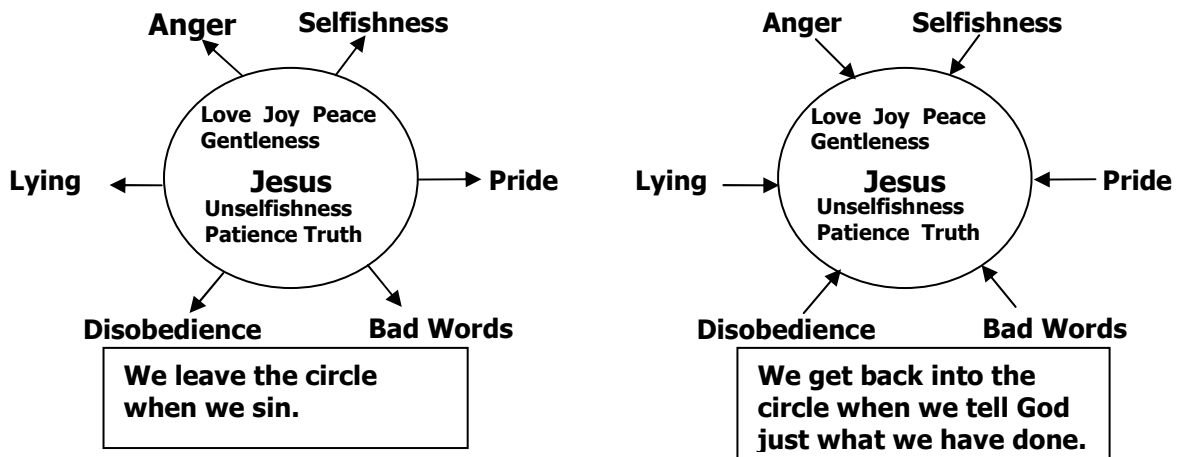
C. CONFESS THE SIN

When we talk to God about our sins we are **confessing** them to Him. When we do this we should not just say, "And forgive my sins. Amen." We should think about the thing that was wrong and tell God all about it. If it was jealousy, pride, anger, unclean thoughts, selfishness, saying bad words, or whatever it was, ask the Lord to forgive **that sin**. Look up I John (not Gospel of John) 1:9 and read it very carefully. Let's suppose you are playing ball. As you rush to get the ball, someone kicks you. You "fly off the handle" and shout, "Why don't you watch where you are going with your big feet?" Then, because you are angry, you go on and say other things which a Christian should not say. To make matters worse, your friends know that you are a Christian. After the storm is over, you are thoroughly ashamed of yourself. The first chance you get, you tell your friends you are sorry. However, this does not take away that heavy feeling from your heart. You **know** you have sinned also against your Heavenly Father. He heard every word you said. Tell Him right away all about what happened and how sorry you are. You should then ask Him to help you not to get angry again. What joy it is to be forgiven and to get back close to your Heavenly Father. As you keep near to Him, He will help you to be a happy, growing Christian. So, you see, the way to get back into fellowship with God is by asking God to forgive **the sin** or **the sins** that caused you to get out of fellowship with Him.



D. COME IN AT THE SAME GATE

John told his father a lie. Then John told another lie to cover up the first one. John was so ashamed and unhappy. He was a Christian but he had sinned. That night he prayed, "Lord, forgive my sins. Amen," but he was still miserable. John's father was deeply hurt and decided to talk to him. He drew pictures like the ones on this page. "John," said his father, "living the Christian life is like being **inside** the circle in these pictures. If we stay close to Jesus, we enjoy peace, joy, love and other things you see in the circle of fellowship. If we sin, it is like going through a gate or opening in the circle and away from the happy things inside. We do not feel near Jesus and are miserable. John, you went out the 'Lying Gate.' The way to get back inside is to come through the **same gate**. Tell God how sorry you are that you told me those lies. Ask Him to help you always to tell the truth. He will forgive and wash away those lies. Once again you will be enjoying all the things inside the circle of fellowship."



Remember, it is not enough to say, “And forgive my sins. Amen.” You should confess each sin by name, telling the Lord just what happened. If you do this, God will forgive you and cleanse you from sin. He has promised to do this in I John 1:9.

Puzzle Corner

What bird is it?			
My first is in Hand,			My whole is the name
	but it isn't in finger,		of a Biblical bird,
My second's in Loiter,			
	but it isn't in linger,		Whose sad little cry
My third is in Evil,			you will often have heard.
	but it isn't in good,		
My forth is in Tree,			
	but it isn't in wood.		

Be sure to keep all your lessons in a notebook.